

B2
5. (Amended) A method for producing graphite carbon powder according to claim 4, wherein thin graphite material which is inserted between the end of the container and the guide electrode prevents heat loss at the end of the graphite container.

B3
12. (Amended) A graphite powder which is prepared with the apparatus as described in claim 11, wherein an interlayer distance (C_0) in a C-axis direction in crystal is 6.730 Å or less.

13. (Amended) A graphite powder which is prepared with the apparatus as described in claim 11, wherein an interlayer distance (C_0) in a C-axis direction in crystal is 6.725 Å or less.

REMARKS

The Office Action of May 24, 2002 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

In the Office Action summary page, the Examiner indicates that claims 1-10 and 12-14 are allowed, but this obviously is a mistake since in the remaining portions of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects all of these claims.

Claims 3 and 4 have been rejected under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 as indefinite.

The Examiner states that claim 3 is self contradictory. The Examiner asks whether the interior is one portion or is it divided up.

Applicants submit that claim 3 is not self contradictory. The Examiner has not provided any reason why he believes claim 3 to be self-contradictory. In answer to the question of whether the interior is one portion or is divided up, applicants point out that in claim 3, the interior comprises one continuous portion, which is made from divided portions of a container